

of trade with nations engulfed in civil war, must also take responsibility in assisting these nations to heal the wounds of war and creating a just and lasting peace in those countries. While there have been a number of groups within the gemstone industry that have been responsive, others have not yet chosen to acknowledge the humanitarian emergency that the trade in conflict diamonds has produced.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, before I speak on the bill, I want to congratulate Members on both sides of the aisle, especially the gentleman from New York (Mr. HOUGHTON) for the gentleman's work on behalf of getting this bill introduced. I also thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) on the other side of the aisle.

This is a very important bill that has nothing to do with partisan politics whatsoever. When it was introduced in 2001, it passed this body by a vote of 408 to six. I think the six Members that voted against it at the time are probably reconsidering it because there is no basis for anyone to find any objections to it.

I hope that the bill we have before us this evening, based on H.R. 2722 from the 107th Congress, which passed by that 408 to six vote, and since that time the administration has worked with the international community to finalize the structure of the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme which controls the trade in rough diamonds, that it is to all countries, and it prevents trade in conflict diamonds and the bill reflects the new structure. I thank the administration for its hard work and dedication to the effort on this important issue, too.

The funds derived from the sale of rough diamonds have been used by rebels and state actors to finance military activities and to overthrow legitimate governments, subvert international efforts to promote peace and stability, and commit horrifying atrocities against unarmed citizens.

During the past decade, more than 6.5 million people from Sierra Leone, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been driven from their homes by wars waged in large part for control of diamond mining areas. The United Nations Security Council has issued resolutions urging nations to take actions against conflict diamonds. In response, the United States has issued various Presidential executive orders to ban direct imports from nations subject to the United Nations resolution. The United States has also led international negotiations to reach an agreement that set standards for diamond extracting and trading nations to meet.

These international negotiations, the Kimberly Process it is called, came

after the name of the city in which they were initiated. It creates a system of checks and balances for rough diamonds throughout the world. This system tracks through governmentally verifiable certificates that trade in diamonds between countries and individuals. Since its January 1 implementation date, over 40 countries are participating in this system. The United States requires this system to ensure that its leadership position in this critical matter continues. Finally, this bill is consistent with our WTO obligations.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill and to pass this important legislation.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1584—To implement effective measures to stop trade in conflict diamonds, and for other purposes. The Clean Diamonds Act prohibits the import of diamonds into the United States unless the exporting country is implementing a system of controls on the export or import of rough diamonds that meets specified requirements, consistent with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 55/56 adopted on December 1, 2000, or a future international agreement which implements such controls and to which the United States is a signatory. Additionally, this legislation sets forth both civil and criminal penalties for violations of the bill's requirements. It prohibits the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and the Export-Import Bank from engaging in certain transactions in connection with projects or exports to countries violating the requirements of this Act. If further expresses the sense of Congress that the President should take steps to negotiate an international agreement to eliminate the trade in diamonds used to support conflict in the country or regions in which such diamonds are mined.

Mr. Speaker, to many people, diamonds symbolize love, happiness, or wealth. But for others, they mean conflict, misery and poverty. In African countries such as Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sierra Leone, the profits from unregulated diamond trade allows rebel forces to obtain weapons and fund armed conflicts. Also, this practice spills over into neighboring countries that can be used as trading and transit grounds for illicit diamonds, and once the diamonds are brought to market, their origin is difficult to trace and once polished, they can no longer be identified. As a result of the complex nature of this process, tens of thousands of civilians have been killed, raped, mutilated or abducted.

In an amputee camp in the capital of Free-town, one will find a three-year-old girl whose right arm was chopped off with a machete. One might also not be shocked to find her or himself opposite a 14-year-old girl, pregnant by rape, who will never be able to hold her child because the rebels who raped her also hacked off both of her arms. Other amputees describe the horror of being forced to select at random a piece of paper out of a bag, and losing the body part written on the scrap—arm, leg, ear, or nose.

The enactment of this legislation will not only eliminate the degree to which human lives are negatively impacted by the brutal practices of these rebel forces, but also it would do much to increase consumer con-

fidence with respect to the purchase of diamonds by allowing American jewelers and jewelry store to tell their consumers the diamonds in their store are clean diamonds. Currently, no jeweler knows where their diamonds come from, and they cannot assure their customers their diamond purchases are not unwittingly subsidizing a cruel and abusive rebel force in one of these nations. Nonetheless, once the "Clean Diamonds Act" is passed, jewelers will at last have a "clean stream" of diamonds to sell. They can be confident the United States government is evaluating every diamond supplying country and excluding those that fail to conform to internal standards.

In a statement by Ambassador Juan Larrain, Chairman of the Monitoring Mechanism on sanctions against UNITA, he stated "It has been said that war is the price of peace. . . [These nations] have already paid too much. Let them live a better life."

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join in this momentous effort to end the devastation that is occurring as a result of these conflicts. Now is the time to act on behalf of the many lives being sacrificed and those that are calling for our help and our immediate attention to their pain and suffering. For this reason, we must remain vigilant and not allow ourselves to ignore the blood of the blameless.

However, it is imperative that we not penalize African countries like Ghana, that have been diligent in certifying their diamonds and standing up against the rebel, terrorist, and violent use of such diamonds. This is an important economic resource of such countries and the legislature must acknowledge that.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CRANE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1584, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1615

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of H.R. 1584, the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

POSTAL CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT SYSTEM FUNDING REFORM ACT OF 2003

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the